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ABSTRACT

Two approaches to spelling instruction were compared by measuring which program was more successful. Thirty-two fourth-grade students participated; instructional intervention spanned 6 months. The control group used the materials and procedures of the Macmillian Basal Series. The experimental group used the Spelltex Individualized Spelling Kit. The results of each program were measured by using the California Test of Basic Skills, Level 1 spelling test for grade four. The means of the two groups were compared by using a "t" test. Results indicated: (1) no significant difference between the total group of students using the individualized approach and the total group of students using the basal series; (2) no significant difference between the girls in the control group and the girls in the experimental group; and (3) no significant difference in spelling abilities between the boys using the Macmillian Basal Series and the boys using the Spelltex Individualized Spelling Kit. (Eight tables of data and 38 footnotes are included; 38 references, a list of the steps in the individualized plan, the 5-day basal speller plan, and 6 tables of data are attached.) (RS)

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ED359496

A COMPARISON OF THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE INDIVIDUALIZED APPROACH AND THE TRADITIONAL APPROACH TO TEACHING SPELLING IN THE FOURTH GRADE

Thesis

Presented to

the Faculty of the Graduate School

Salem College

In Partial Fulfillment

of the Requirements for the Degree

Master of Art

by

Betty R. Tustin

April 2, 1985

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CHAPTER ONE

Introduction

The ability to spell is considered an important goal of basic education. There is disagreement among experts concerning the best approach to spelling instruction. Spelling instruction is influenced by commercial textbooks. These published materials often contain many activities that do not help the student learn the correct spelling of a word.

The commercial textbooks seldom require students to produce words they need in their own writing. Hildreth said, "The published spellers, with their fixed, formal word lists, have prevented the unification of writing and spelling that is so essential if pupils are to develop the ability to express their ideas fluently and accurately in writing."[1]

Some proficient researchers believe the most effective method is "...to teach the child to 'hear' and to 'analyze' his speech in such a way as to facilitate the spelling of his speech."[2] This act of calling attention to silent letters and phonetic respelling may be confusing to the child who is trying to learn to spell a word. Horn alleged "Phonics instruction should be utilized as an aid to spelling rather

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[1] Gertrude Hildreth, "Spelling as a Language Tool," Elementary School Journal, 48 (September 1947), 33-40.

[2] Paul Hanna and James Moore, "Spelling from Spoken Word to Written Symbol," Elementary School Journal, 53 (February 1953), 329-37.

than a substitute for the direct study of these words."[3] Graham presented evidence that phonic instruction may be of some benefit in teaching spelling.[4] This phoneme - grapheme approach is used in the basal series and is referred to as the traditional method of instruction of spelling. Students may have words assigned to them that they already have acquired as part of their spelling vocabulary. This repetition is boring, time consuming and unnecessary.

Individualized instruction allows the student to progress at his/her own speed. Pierce states, "While the instructional difficulties produced by individual learner differences are clearly not new educational problems, viable solutions to these problems are still urgently needed."[5] Major problems of the individualized approach are: (1) there are no weekly word lists with number grades, (2) this approach uses more time than the traditional approach for the teacher.

Possible solutions to these two problems are: (1) to have a short traditional spelling period, (2) to use peer teaching.

Different views exist concerning the teaching of spelling. Some published textbooks include many rules and some include only a few rules.

Hillerich concluded:

> The word list in a spelling program is a "Security Blanket"

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[3] Ernest Horn, "Spelling," Encyclopedia of Educational Research, ed. Chester Harris, 3rd ed. (New York: Macmillan, 1960), pp. 1337-54.

[4] S. Graham and L. Miller, "Spelling Research and Practice - A Unified Approach," Focus on Exceptional Children, 12 (October 1979), 1-16.

[5] Judy Camille Pierce, "A Comparison of the Effectiveness of Two Elementary Spelling Programs in Grade Five," Diss. West Virginia Univ., 1981, p. 25.

to provide fluency in writing.

Whether with or without a workbook, there is no justification for teaching rules about the spelling of sounds. To do so can only result in phonetic spellings - most often misspelling - since of all the sounds in English, only the two th sounds (as in thin and then) have single spellings.[6]

Time should not be wasted on rules if the student can spell the word. Only a few rules should be taught and they should be taught when the student can see the need for the rule.

Importance of the Study

Does the individualized approach or the traditional approach to teaching spelling produce the best results? Stefanides, Dyreson, Pflug and Pierce expressed concern over the selection of an appropriate spelling program.[7]

Purpose

It is the purpose of this study to compare the C.T.B.S. test results of the students taught by the individualized approach with the test results of the students taught by the traditional approach.

Features of the individualized kit, hereafter referred to as the Spelltex Individualized Spelling Kit, Published by Curriculum Associates, Incorporated, Woburn, Massachusetts 01801, used in Creed Collins

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[6] Robert L. Hillerich, "That's Teaching Spelling???" Educational Leadership, 39 (May 1982), 615-17.

[7] Gilbert Stefanides, "An Evaluation of Achievement and Attitudes of Students and Teachers Using an Individualized Spelling Approach," Diss. Univ. of Pittsburgh, 1976, p. 1; Margaret Dyreson, Spelling Programs for Elementary Grades, An Educational Products Information Booklet (Tallahassee, Fl.: Florida State Department of Education, 1979), p. 1; Barbara S. Pflug, "Do Fifth Grade Students Learn to Spell Better Using and Individualized Approach or a Traditional Workbook Approach?" Theses, Kean College of New Jersey, 1981, p. 1; Pierce, p. 75.

Elementary School only by the teacher doing this experimental study are as follows:

1. Students study only those words they do not know.
2. Students progress at their own speed.
3. Students work on words suited to their ability.
4. Students must learn each word before going on to the next list.
5. Students learn the meaning and correct pronunciation of each word on the list.
6. Students know the results of their work immediately.
7. Students evaluate themselves.
8. Students learn as many words as they can in one lesson.

Manning suggests using rules as outlined by Davis. These rules will be utilized as needed in this study.[8]

Features of the Macmillian Basal Series used by the teachers in Creed Collins Elementary School are as follows:

1. Students study all words in each unit each week under the direction of the teacher.
2. Students are assigned daily activities to help them learn the weekly word list.
3. All students have the same book regardless of their spelling level.
4. Students work with a unit of words for one week. They move on to the next week's list whether or not they know the previous unit words.

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[8] Maryann Murphy Manning and Gary L. Manning, Improving Spelling in Middle Grades, U. S. Library of Congress No. 1685-8-00 (Washington, D. C.: National Education Association), pp. 11-13.

5. Students study words according to the directions in the textbook as outlined by the teacher.
6. There is no immediate feedback as to the results of the student's work. They do the assignments and hand in their papers.
7. The teacher will teach a list of words that is determined by the authors of the basal series.
8. The student will study a list of words that is determined by the authors of the basal series.

The results of this study will be useful to educators who will be selecting the most effective method to teach spelling.

Hypotheses

The hypotheses are that no difference in spelling scores will be shown between the total students, the boys, and the girls using the Spelltex Individualized Spelling Kit and the same groups using the Macmillian Basal Series.

Limitations

The study was limited to fourth graders in two classrooms in Creed Collins Elementary School, Pennsboro, West Virginia.

The study was limited to data obtained from students using the Spelltex Individualized Spelling Kit and students using the Macmillian Basal Series.

The study was limited to a six month period beginning in September of 1984 and ending in March 1985.

Assumptions

The researcher assumed the sixteen students in the experimental

group and the sixteen students in the control group represented an adequate population for testing.

The teachers involved in this study did not allow their personal opinion of the programs to influence their teaching.

Definition of Terms

Individualized approach: A type of instruction wherein the student starts on his own level and progresses at his own speed.

Macmillian Basal Series: A traditional spelling textbook adopted for use in the Ritchie County School System.

Orthography: The study of letters and spelling.

Phoneme - grapheme: Phoneme represents a letter's sound. Grapheme represents the written letter. This word combination means sound to written word correspondence.

Spelltex Individualized Spelling Kit: An individualized spelling approach published by Curriculum Associates, Inc., North Billerica, Massachusetts.

Traditional approach: A type of instruction wherein the student is guided by the teacher through activities each day of the week to help them learn the words in that lesson. Each Friday a test is given on the words in that lesson. All students will work on fourth grade level words.

Abbreviations

C.C.E.S.: This abbreviation is used for Creed Collins Elementary School.

C.T.B.S.: This abbreviation is used for the Comprehensive Test of Basic Skills.

CHAPTER TWO

Review of Literature

Introduction

Spelling is a regular class in the elementary school curriculum. Many students have difficulty learning to spell. Graham charged "There is also an ever present and growing concern that our school's spelling achievement is lower than it was 30 or 40 years ago."[1] All too often recommendations about spelling based on research have not been implemented in actual classroom practice.

Manning asks this question, "How do we develop independent spellers who edit what they write?" The purpose of learning to spell is to be able to correctly spell what you write.[2] Students should be given the opportunities to do lots of writing and should be provided with many editing opportunities.

This research examines individualized instruction and the instructional methodology used in the basal series. There are various points of view regarding the best method for developing good spellers.

Individualized Approach

Suzzalo presented evidence that using a spelling series is not

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[1] S. Graham and L. Miller, "Spelling Research and Practice - A Unified Approach," Focus on Exceptional Children, 12 (October 1979), pp. 1-16.

[2] Maryann Murphy Manning and Gary L. Manning, Improving Spelling in Middle Grades, U. S. Library of Congress No. 1685-8-00 (Washington, D. C.: National Education Association), pp. 11-13.

the most effective approach to teaching spelling. The use of a spelling series has become a tradition and every reformer has discovered that traditions are hard to change.[3]

The individualized method departs from the traditional use of a list where all students are assigned one specific list and are expected to master the list. They often move on to the next list before they master all the words on the first list. The individualized method allowed each student to develop his own list and work on those words until he has mastered the list. This method does not allow the student to proceed to other words until they have mastered all of the words they have studied. A spelling series is easy for the teacher to use because it contains steps with directions to follow each day of the week. Little planning is needed.

Guiles seemed to indicate that the normal growth of those students without basal series instruction is about the same as those with instruction using a basal series.[4] Is there a one best approach to teaching spelling?

Children use words in their writing that they do not know how to spell. These words vary so much that individualization is inescapable. The necessity for individualizing spelling is also evidenced by the wide range in spelling ability and achievement that exists

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[3] Henry Suzzalo, The Teaching of Spelling (Boston: Houghton Mifflin 1913), p. 23.

[4] R. E. Guiles, "Effect of Formal Spelling on Spelling Accuracy," Journal of Educational Research, 37 (1943), 284-89.

among the children in a classroom.[5]

Hildreth revealed:

> By the beginning of the fourth or fifth grade the variations in spelling abilities of the pupils in any typical group will range over three or four grade levels even without considering the best and slowest pupils in the class. There are seldom more than five or six pupils within one class who need the same words or the same kind of help.[6]

Each child should have an individual word list growing out of personal needs. The word list can be obtained by listing words the child has misspelled from his previous list, words misspelled in his written work and words that are needed by most of the class. She does not recommend the use of a basal speller. Word lists may be made by the student or by the student and teacher, or by two students.

Horn felt that instruction in phonetics should be used as an aid to spelling and not as a substitute for the systematic study of words in a spelling list.[7]

Cook states, "The findings of this study suggest that the method used in teaching spelling should insure an adequate amount of drill on actual words to be learned." She believes the method of teaching spelling should avoid any confusion which might result from too early and too extensive an analysis of a word which might better be taught as a

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[5] Thomas Horn and Henry J. Otto, Spelling Instruction (Austin: The University of Texas, 1954), pp. 14-15.

[6] Gertrude Hildreth, Teaching Spelling (New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1955), p. 171.

[7] Ernest Horn, "Phonetics and Spelling," Elementary School Journal 57 (May 1957), 432.

whole word.[8]

Allred noted that the individualized method provided as much growth as the whole class method.[9]

Jackson stated that spelling lists and spellers tend to separate spelling from reading and writing. She suggests that the teacher and students get all those words busy writing stories and spelling will improve and there will be a new enthusiasm for writing and reading. She recommends having each child keep a loose-leaf notebook with alphabetical dividers. The student records words he needs to know how to spell in the course of all his writing experiences in school. This is an example of using the individualized approach to teaching spelling.[10] According to Jackson, a child's spelling will develop to an adult level if he is given opportunities to do lots of writing.

Oba and Moss conducted a study that indicated considerable improvement by students who used an individualized approach to studying spelling.[11]

Allred felt that children benefit from learning very few rules when learning to spell.[12] Some published spelling series list many

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[8] Ruth Cathlyn Cook, "Evaluation of Two Methods of Teaching Spelling," Elementary School Journal, 57, (October 1957), 21-27.

[9] Ruel A. Allred, Three Studies in Elementary Spelling Instruction (ERIC ED 014 473), p. 46.

[10] Mae L. Jackson, Individualized Spelling Lists (ERIC ED 089 011), p. 86.

[11] Betty Oba and Martha Moss, Individualizing Spelling Instruction in the Small School (ERIC ED 036 362), p. 1.

[12] Ruel A. Allred, Application of Spelling Research (ERIC ED 061 218), p. 23.

rules and some list few rules. Rules should not be memorized. The student should see the need for the rule when the rule is taught. Some rules are applied one hundred per-cent of the time. The child should be taught these rules.

Horn stated that there is no conclusive evidence that the study of phonics is beneficial in learning to spell.[13]

Converse alleged that teachers should be able to organize the classroom for meeting individual needs, but the majority of teachers do not. Teacher-directed activities must be kept at a minimum. The teacher needs to supervise the operations of the classroom. The responsibility for learning is placed on the learner.[14] When a child assumes this responsibility, he profits from his experiences. If he does not assume his own responsibility for learning to spell there is little progress made.

Shack suggested using phonics as a guide because errors in spelling come about as a result of trying to use phonics in learning to spell.[15]

Horn reported most sounds are spelled many ways. Most misspelled words are phonetically correct. Children do not understand word attack principles. More than one-third of the words in the dictionary have

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[13] Ernest Horn, Teaching Spelling. What Research Says to the Teacher (ERIC ED 047 488), p. 22.

[14] Jerry Converse, Classroom Organization in Meeting Individual Needs (ERIC ED 041 719), p. 1.

[15] Sybil Shack, Simply Spelling (ERIC ED 041 922), p. 16.

more than one accepted pronunciation. More than one-half of the words contain silent letters. About one-sixth of the words contain double letters. Words with unstressed syllables are difficult to spell phonetically.[16]

Hinrichs concluded that commercial spelling programs are not effective. A teacher who wished to develop a good spelling program did not find the basal series available to be helpful. New materials on the market are filled with busywork. These basal texts suggest procedures and contain word lists which ignore research done in the field of spelling over the last fifty years. Research indicated that a good spelling program includes: suitable word list, efficient teaching procedure and effective methods by which the student learns to spell the word.[17]

Schnell noted that children do not learn at the same rate. Teachers should allow for individual differences in order to avoid a jumble mixture of procedures that brings unwanted results.[18]

It is important to begin a spelling program when the child is ready to spell and not before. The child may be ready to spell if he can write his own name from memory.

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[16] Ernest Horn, "Spelling," Encyclopedia of Educational Research, ed. C. Harris, 3rd ed. (New York: Macmillan, 1960), pp. 1337-54.

[17] Ronald W. Hinrichs, "An Old But Valid Procedure," Elementary English, 52 (February 1975), 249-52.

[18] L. Schnell, "B+ in Composition: C- in Spelling," Language Arts 52 (1976), 239-57.

Hammill wrote, "From a practical viewpoint, it appears that after grade four no spelling instruction is as effective as special instruction."[19]

> Tovey felt students should be taught to think of spelling in terms of a visual pattern rather than to employ the strategy of sounding out the word. It would appear that matching sounds to letter is not reliable unless the student already knows the correct spelling of the word. He feels that teachers are convinced that sounding out of a word is effective. They continue to overemphasize the sound out approach to teaching spelling.[20]

Graham and Miller noted that elementary students within a single grade level exhibit diverse spelling problems. The problems may be caused by inadequate contemporary classroom instruction, commercial materials that are not suited for classroom use and spelling programs based on research findings are not available.[21]

There are several approaches used by students in studying spelling. No single method is effective. Levels of spelling ability are varied in any grade. Most published materials are not based on spelling research according to Pflug.[22] Teachers do not usually use methods of teaching spelling that are based on research.

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[19] Donald D. Hammill and Others, "The Effects of Spelling Instruction: A Preliminary Study," Elementary School Journal, 78 (September 1977), 70-72.

[20] Duane R. Tovey, "Sound-It-Out: A Reasonable Approach to Spelling?" Reading World, 17 (March 1978), 220-33.

[21] S. Graham and L. Miller, "Spelling Research and Practice - A Unified Approach," Focus on Exceptional Children, 12 (October 1979), 1-16.

[22] Barbara S. Pflug, "Do Fifth Grade Students Learn to Spell Better Using an Individualized Approach or a Traditional Workbook Approach?" Theses, Kean College of New Jersey, 1981, p. 1.

Stetson compared the results of using two contrasting spelling approaches. One approach emphasized learning spelling rules, the study of word meanings, and careful attention to sound - letter patterns. The other approach was characterized by "no-rules," looking at the word, recalling from memory the correct spelling and then writing the word, check the spelling and correct if the spelling is incorrect. This study showed that there was no significant improvement on standardized achievement tests regardless of the method used by the instructor and students.[23]

Graham stated that spelling instruction is strongly influenced by commercial materials that form the foundation of most spelling programs. The adequacy of current spelling texts have been questioned by several researchers. Contemporary classroom instruction usually does not account for the wide range of spelling abilities and achievement apparent at every grade level.[24]

Irving quoted Andrew Jackson as saying, "It's a damn poor mind that can think of only one way to spell a word." Irving felt that a person desiring to learn to spell a new word should look it up in a dictionary.[25]

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[23] Elton G. Stetson, The Effect of Two Contrasting Spelling Approaches on the Achievement of Sixth Graders, (ERIC ED 205 979), Abstract.

[24] Steve Graham, "Effective Spelling Instruction," Elementary School Journal, 83 (May 1983), 560.

[25] John Irving, "How to Get an "A" in Spelling," Readers Digest, (Feb. 1984), 96.

Individualization requires that the teacher be responsive to students unique characteristics and educational needs. Effective spelling is planned, monitored and modified on the basis of assessment information. The effectiveness of a spelling program is heavily dependent upon students' attitudes. The classroom teacher should read the latest findings by researchers in the field of spelling and apply their findings to their own classroom situation.

Basal Series

Spelling authorities do not agree on the regularity and consistency of American English orthography.

The spelling classes in elementary classrooms are influenced by commercial texts.

These texts are easy to use. The teacher usually follows the manual which state the activities for each day.

Archer emphasized the importance of a well organized spelling book. Each new experience adds to the child's world of knowledge; therefore, the child needs constructive material.[26]

Russell found that systematic training in phonics at the first grade level improved spelling achievement at the second grade level. Intensive phonics instruction creates greater gains in spelling than non-phonic approaches.[27]

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[26] C. P. Archer, "Saving Time in Spelling Instruction," Journal of Educational Research, 20 (December 1929), 122-31.

[27] D. H. Russell, "Diagnostic Study of Spelling Readiness," Journal of Educational Research, 37 (December 1943), 276-83.

Moore researched and found that phonemes of three thousand words encountered by children in grades one to eight were regularly represented by certain graphemes eighty per cent of the time.[28]

Hanna and Moore expressed the concern that elementary spelling programs should use to their advantage the regularity of the sound to letter patterns in teaching students to spell.[29]

Horn said, "The use of a basal text in spelling has become such a tradition that it is difficult for teachers and laymen to think of spelling instruction without a basal text.[30]

A basal text is a sense of security for the teacher and students. The teacher and students do what the textbook instructs them to do.

Horn stated that the inadequacies of the English alphabet causes difficulties and inconsistencies in spelling. One symbol for each sound and one sound for each symbol would be ideal. The English spelling is not an ideal situation.[31]

Horn recommended the teaching of those rules that apply to a considerable number of words and have few exceptions. Horn wrote:

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[28] James Moore, "Phonetic Elements Appearing in a Three Thousand Word Spelling Vocabulary," Diss. Stanford Univ., 1951.

[29] Paul Hannah and James Moore, "Spelling From Spoken Word to Written Symbol," Elementary School Journal, 53 (February 1953), 329-33.

[30] Horn and Otto, p. 22.

[31] Ernest Horn, "Spelling, "Encyclopedia of Educational Research, ed. Chester Harris, 3rd ed. (New York: Macmillan, 1960) pp. 1337-54.

> These rules are (1) Words ending in a silent e usually drop the final e before the addition of suffixes beginning with a vowel, but they keep the final e before the addition of suffixes beginning with a consonant. (2) When a word ends in a consonant and y, change the y to i before adding all suffixes to words ending in a vowel and y or when adding suffix beginning with i. (3) Words of one syllable or more than one syllable accented on the last syllable ending in a single consonant preceded by a single vowel, double the final consonant before adding a suffix beginning with a vowel. (4) The letter q is always followed by a u in common English words. (5) Proper nouns and most adjectives formed from proper nouns should begin with capital letters.[32]

Reid stated that the results of his study do not show any one method of teaching spelling to be superior over the other methods.[33]

Hodges observed that recent research has revealed that the sound-to-letter relationship is basic logic. Spelling is a crucial part of our total language arts program. Increased understanding of the nature and function of the learning process in relationship to the spoken and written language will enable the child to be limited in his writing only by his spoken vocabulary.[34]

Hodges and Rudorf stated that the statistical examination they made assured that the great majority of phonemes in spoken American-English are indeed consistently represented in writing.[35]

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[32] Horn, pp. 1337-54.

[33] Hale C. Reid and A. W. Hieronymes, An Evaluation of Five Methods of Teaching Spelling in the Second and Third Grades (ERIC ED 001 266), Abstract.

[34] Richard E. Hodges, What's New in Language Arts - Spelling (ERIC ED 017 489).

[35] Richard Hodges and E. Hugh Rudorf, Research on Handwriting and Spelling (Champaign: National Council of Teachers of English, 1966), p. 31.

Groff attested that students who have greater phonetic knowledge also have greater spelling ability. Special teaching of phonetics has not improved the student's spelling achievement.[36]

Powell stated that the use of a basal series could be profitable to the student if the teacher and students use the test papers after they have been checked. Proper follow-up is for the teacher to analyze the misspelled words to determine the types of errors made by each student. Corrective activities should be planned to help each student with his or her spelling problems.[37]

Hillerich listed these findings as a practical approach to diagnosis in spelling. He suggests the following actions:

> (1) Determine the level of word lists each pupil should be in; (2) Teach the security lists with a research - based approach; (3) Teach generalizations about adding endings and the use of apcstrophes; (4) Provide experience with homophones; (5) Provide instruction in using a dictionary for spelling, along with experience with the ways of spelling various sounds; (6) Develop a desire to spell correctly when a piece of writing is going beyond an informal group; (7) Provide for much writing, since (a) this is the only reason for learning to spell, and (b) automatic spelling of the security list is a mechanical skill and is lost if it is not used.[38]

When the evidence, on both the consistency and the irregularities of English spelling, is critically and realistically assessed, little

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[36] Patrick Groff, Research on Spelling and Phonetics (ERIC ED 030 645), p. 132.

[37] C. Glennon Powell, "Don't Throw Away Those Spelling Test Papers...Yet," Elementary English, 52 (February 1975), 253-57.

[38] Robert L. Hillerich, "Spelling: What Can Be Diagnosed?" The Elementary School Journal, 83 (February 1983), 145.

justification is found for the claim that pupils can arrive deductively at the spelling of most words they can pronounce. There seems to be no escape from the direct teaching of the large number of common words which do not conform in their spelling to any phonetic or orthographic rule.

Summary

Research seems to indicate that students study spelling several ways, and no one way has been proven best. Each class has several levels of spelling ability. Most published series are based on previous published series.

Present research does not support the use of an individualized program or the use of a basal series program. There is a need for further research.

CHAPTER THREE

Materials and Methods

Introduction

The purpose of this chapter was to discuss the research design, the population, the use of the measuring instruments and analytical processes used to evaluate the data.

The primary data dealing with teaching spelling by the individualized approach and traditional approach used in this study were the scores on the C.T.B.S. test made by fourth grade students at C.C.E.S. The references used in this research were: 1. Published C.T.B.S. test. 2. Published studies. 3. Texts. 4. Unpublished dissertations. 5. Theses.

Research Design

The research design was an experimental type comparing the C.T.B.S. test results of students who used the individualized approach with the results of the students who used the traditional approach. The experimental group consisted of the students using the individualized approach. Table 1 lists the number of students in the experimental group which were 17 students who used the Spelltex Individualized Spelling Kit and the control group consisted of 16 students who used the Macmillian Basal Series. C.C.E.S. has two fourth grade rooms. Students withdrawing or enrolling in the fourth grade during 1984 - 1985 school year at C.C.E.S. were not included in this study.

Table 1

Student Distribution

Group	No. of Students
Spelltex Individualized Kit	17
Macmillian Basal Series	16

The study covered a period of six months. The experimental group engaged in spelling fifteen minutes five days a week using the Spelltex Individualized Program. The control group followed the guidelines as outlined in the Macmillian Basal Series. This group engaged in doing spelling approximately thirty minutes a day.

The students from each group were given a spelling pretest using the C.T.B.S. Spelling Level 1, Form T, the second week of the 1984 school year. The teacher gave oral directions for the spelling test from the C.T.B.S. manual. The student was to read each sentence and decide whether the underlined word was spelled right or wrong. If the student thought the word was spelled right he filled in the space with the "R" in it. He filled in the space with the "W" in it if he thought the word was spelled wrong. The time to do the test was 12 minutes.

The following hypotheses were used:

1. No difference in spelling scores will be shown between the

students using the Spelltex Individualized Spelling Kit and the students using the Macmillian Basal Series.

2. No difference in spelling scores will be shown between the boys using the Spelltex Individualized Spelling Kit and the boys using the Macmillian Basal Series.
3. No difference in spelling scores will be shown between the girls using the Spelltex Individualized Spelling Kit and the girls using the Macmillian Basal Series.

A probability level of .05 or better was required in order to accept or reject the hypothesis. The pretest and posttest raw mean scores for all groups are shown in the tables. A t test was completed to see if there was any significant difference between the means of the samples.

CHAPTER FOUR

Results

Introduction

This study was conducted in order to measure the success of an individualized spelling program and the success of a basal series program. Success was measured by using the results of the C.T.B.S. Level 1, Form T test. This chapter contains the results of the pretest and posttest.

Statistical Review

Hypothesis 1 - No difference in spelling scores will be shown between the students using the Spelltex Individualized Kit and the students using the Macmillian Basal Series.

The C.T.B.S. pretest was administered to the total group during the second week of September, 1984. The means for the experimental group and the control group are shown in Table 2. The mean for the group using the Spelltex Individualized Kit was 32.7647. The mean for the group using the Macmillian Basal Series was 32.4375. The results of the *t* test are shown in Table 2. To be significant at the .05 level the *t* value must exceed 2.042. The *t* value was .1415. The experimental group and the control group were not significantly different.

Table 2

Mean Raw Scores for the C.T.B.S. Pretest

Group	N	Pretest Means	S.D.	t^a	Significance
Experimental	17	32.7647	6.9149	.1415	NS
Control	16	32.4375	6.3242		

t^a = 2.042 is significant at the .05 level.

The same test was administered as a posttest to the experimental group and the control group during the second week in March, 1985.

Table 3 shows the mean raw scores of 32.3750 for the experimental group and 32.4375 for the control group on the C.T.B.S. Level 1, Form T used as a pretest. The mean raw scores of 35.7500 for the experimental group and 37.4375 for the control group on the C.T.B.S. Level 1, Form T used as a posttest are also shown in Table 3.

Table 3

Means and Standard Deviation for Pretest and Posttest Scores for the C.T.B.S. Spelling Test for Each Program

Program	N	Pretest Means	S.D.	Posttest Means	S.D.
Spelltex Individualized Kit	16	32.3750	6.9462	35.7500	4.9732
Macmillian Basal Series	16	32.4375	6.3242	37.4375	2.9881

Table 4 shows the mean gain scores on the C.T.B.S. tests for the control group and the experimental group. The total sample size was thirty-three fourth grade students at the beginning of the study. Thirty-two students completed the posttest in March, 1985. The analysis of data was based on the results obtained by the thirty-two students. The mean gain was 2 for the Spelltex Individualized Kit. The mean gain was 3 for the Macmillian Basal Series. The t test results were 1.0530. The t value must exceed 2.0420 to be significant at the .05 level. The test showed no significant difference between the two groups. Hypothesis 1 was accepted for the total experimental and total control groups.

Table 4

t Test of Mean Gain Scores for the C.T.B.S. for the Experimental Group and the Control Group

Group	N	Mean Gain	S.D.	t^a	Significance
Spelltex Individualized Kit	16	3.3750	2.8489	.4639	NS
Macmillian Basal Series	16	5.0000	3.4058		

t^a = 2.042 is significant at the .05 level.

Hypothesis 2 - No difference in spelling scores will be shown between the boys using the Spelltex Individualized Spelling Kit and the boys using the Macmillian Basal Series.

The mean raw scores for the boys on the C.T.B.S. test are shown in Table 5. The boys using the Spelltex Individualized Spelling Kit had a slightly lower score on the posttest than did the boys using the Macmillian Basal Series.

Mean gain scores were calculated and a t test was performed. The results of the t test are shown in Table 6. The t value must exceed 2.120 in order to be significant at .05 level. The t value was .2868. This determined that the means were not significantly different. Hypothesis 2 was accepted for the boys.

Table 5

Means and Standard Deviation for Pretest and Posttest Scores for the C.T.B.S. Spelling Test for the Boys

Program	N	Pretest Means	S.D.	Posttest Means	S.D.
Spelltex Individualized Kit	10	31.9000	7.1431	35.4000	5.2926
Macmillian Basal Series	8	34.8750	3.8707	38.6250	1.9955

Table 6

t Test of Mean Gain Scores for the C.T.B.S. Spelling Test for Boys

Group	N	Mean Gain	S.D.	t	Significance
Spelltex Individualized Kit	10	3.4000	3.1355	.2868	NS
Macmillian Basal Series	8	3.7500	2.0529		

Hypothesis 3 - No difference in spelling scores will be shown between the girls using the Spelltex Individualized Spelling Kit and the girls using the Macmillian Basal Series.

The mean raw scores for the girls on the C.T.B.S. test are shown in Table 7. The girls using the Spelltex Individualized Spelling Kit had a slightly higher score on the posttest than did the girls using the Macmillian Basal Series.

Mean gain scores were calculated an a t test was performed. The results of the t test are shown in Table 8. The t value must exceed 2.1790 in order to be significant at .05 level. The t value was 1.4572. This determined that the means were not significantly different. Hypcthesis 2 was accepted for the girls.

Table 7

Means and Standard Deviation for Pretest and Posttest Scores for the C.T.B.S. Spelling Test for the Girls

Program	N	Pretest Means	S.D.	Posttest Means	S.D.
Spelltex Individualized Kit	6	33.1667	6.6458	36.5000	4.7643
Macmillian Basal Series	8	30.0000	7.5593	36.2500	3.4538

Table 8

t Test of Mean Gain Scores for the C.T.B.S. Spelling Test for Girls

Group	N	Mean Gain	S.D.	t	Significance
Spelltex Individualized Kit	6	3.3333	3.0111	1.4572	NS
Macmillian Basal Series	8	6.2500	4.1318		

t = 2.1790 is significant at the .05 level.

Discussion

The means of each spelling program showed that the total group of students using the Spelltex Individualized Kit had a slightly lower mean on the posttest than did students using the Macmillian Basal Series. The t test showed no significant difference between the two groups. Hypothesis 1 which stated that no significant difference in spelling scores will be shown between the total groups of students using the Spelltex Individualized Kit and the students using the Macmillian Basal Series was accepted.

The means of each spelling program showed that the boys using the Spelltex Individualized Kit had a slightly lower mean on the posttest than did boys using the Macmillian Basal Series. The t test showed no significant difference between the two groups. Hypothesis 2

which stated that no significant difference in spelling scores will be shown between the boys using the Spelltex Individualized Kit and the boys using the Macmillian Basal Series was accepted.

The means of each spelling program showed that the girls using the Spelltex Individualized Kit had a slightly larger mean on the posttest than did girls using the Macmillian Basal Series. The *t* test did not show a significant difference between the two groups of girls. Hypothesis 3 which stated that no significant difference in spelling scores will be shown between the girls using the Spelltex Individualized Kit and the girls using the Macmillian Basal Series was accepted.

CHAPTER FIVE

Summary, Conclusions, Recommendations

Summary

This study was made to compare two approaches to the teaching of spelling in the fourth grade at Creed Collins Elementary School. One approach used the Macmillian Basal Series as the control group. The other approach used the Spelltex Individualized Kit as the experimental group.

The experimental group had spelling for fifteen minute periods each day of the week. The outline for the Spelltex Kit was followed. The control group followed the outline for the Macmillian Basal Series. They had spelling five days a week.

The control group and the experimental group continued their work over a period of six months. Thirty-three students were involved in the study. Only thirty-two students were in the program from the beginning to the end of the study. The results of this study were based on the test results of the thirty-two students who were in the classes in September, 1984, and still in the classes in March, 1985.

The analysis of data supported the hypothesis that no difference in spelling scores will be shown between the total groups of students using the Spelltex Individualized Spelling Kit and the students using the Macmillian Basal Series.

The analysis of data supported the hypothesis that no difference in spelling scores will be shown between the boys using the Spelltex

Individualized Spelling Kit and the boys using the Macmillian Basal Series.

The analysis of data supported the hypothesis that no difference in spelling scores will be shown between the girls using the Spelltex Individualized Spelling Kit and the girls using the Macmillian Basal Series.

Conclusions

The results of this study has not shown any one spelling program to be the best program.

It appears that there is no significant difference in achievement of those students who study words they already know how to spell and of those students who study only the words they do not know.

Students who progress at their own speed do not seem to progress more than those students who are assigned daily lessons.

Students who move on to the next lesson whether they know the previous lesson seem to progress as well as those students who must learn to spell each word before going on to the next list.

Students who work on words suited to their ability do not appear to do better than those who work on the same book regardless of their spelling level.

Students who learn the meaning and correct pronunciation of each word in the list do not seem to progress better than students who may not know the meaning and correct pronunciation of each word.

Students who know the results of their work immediately do not appear to do better than those students who wait a period of time for their paper to be corrected by the teacher.

Students who evaluate themselves do not appear to do better than those students who are evaluated by their teacher.

Students who learn as many words as they can in one lesson do not appear to do better than those students who have a fixed number of words in a lesson.

Students who utilized few rules did not appear to do better than students who used several rules in the basal series.

Students who are assigned daily activities to help them learn the weekly word list do not appear to do better than those students who do activities using only the words they do not know how to spell.

Students who studied words according to the directions in the basal text as outlined by the teacher do not seem to do better than those students who do not follow the directions in the basal series.

Students who studied words that have been selected by the author of the basal series do not appear to do better than students who studied words that were on their own level.

Sex grouping does not seem to affect the results of this study.

Would another study bring about the same results if one or more of these variables were employed? The variables to consider might be: 1. Conduct the study over a longer period of time. 2. Use other individualized programs. 3. Use other basal series. 4. Use a larger sample of students. 5. Conduct the study at other grade levels.

Recommendations

This researcher suggests that teachers examine current practices and compare these practices with what researchers have to say about

the best ways to teach spelling. After making these comparisons the teacher can decide what is best to use in his/her own instructional situation. The goals of any spelling program should be to develop students who can spell many words and writers who edit what they write.

The basal series is convenient to use. The individualized method of teaching is more demanding on the teacher's time. This researcher feels that the basal series will continue to be used by the majority of school systems, because of the ease of using it.

The results of this research have not shown one program to be better than the other program. Further research is needed.

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APPENDIX A

INDIVIDUALIZED PLAN

Step 1.	Students study only the words they did not know how to spell.
Step 2.	Students learn the meaning and correct pronunciation of each word.
Step 3.	Students must learn each word before going on to the next words.
Step 4.	Students know the results of their work immediately.
Step 5.	Students learn as many words as they can in each lesson.

APPENDIX B

FIVE DAY BASAL SPELLER PLAN

First Day:	Develop. The students take a pretest on the words in the list.
Second Day:	Practice. The words are presented in various activities.
Third Day:	Apply. The students write sentences using the words in the list. The students edit sentences.
Fourth Day:	Review and Extend. The students work with dictionary skills.
Fifth Day:	Evaluate. The students take the mastery test on the words in the list.

APPENDIX C

RAW SCORES FOR THE ACHIEVEMENT TEST

Experimental Total Group

Pupil	Pretest	Posttest
1	42	42
2	40	42
3	38	42
4	38	42
5	36	39
6	36	37
7	36	37
8	35	35
9	34	35
10	33	35
11	30	34
12	29	33
13	29	32
14	23	32
15	22	31
16	17	24
17	39	Withdrew

APPENDIX D

RAW SCORES FOR THE ACHIEVEMENT TEST

Control Total Group

Pupil	Pretest	Posttest
1	40	42
2	40	41
3	39	40
4	37	39
5	37	39
6	35	39
7	34	38
8	34	38
9	34	38
10	32	38
11	32	37
12	31	37
13	28	35
14	25	34
15	24	34
16	17	30

APPENDIX E

RAW SCORES FOR THE ACHIEVEMENT TEST

Experimental Group - Boys

Pupil	Pretest	Posttest
1	42	42
4	38	42
5	36	39
6	36	37
8	35	35
10	33	35
11	30	34
12	29	33
14	23	32
16	17	24

APPENDIX F

RAW SCORES FOR THE ACHIEVEMENT TEST

Control Group - Boys

Pupil	Pretest	Posttest
1	40	42
3	39	40
4	37	39
6	35	39
8	34	38
9	34	38
10	32	38
13	28	35

APPENDIX G

RAW SCORES FOR THE ACHIEVEMENT TEST

Experimental Group - Girls

Pupil	Pretest	Posttest
2	40	42
3	38	42
7	36	37
9	34	35
13	29	32
15	22	31

APPENDIX H

RAW SCORES FOR THE ACHIEVEMENT TEST

Control Group - Girls

Pupil	Pretest	Posttest
2	40	41
5	37	39
7	34	38
11	32	37
12	31	37
14	25	34
15	24	34
16	17	30

ABSTRACT

A COMPARISON OF THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE
INDIVIDUALIZED APPROACH AND THE TRADITIONAL APPROACH
TO TEACHING SPELLING IN THE FOURTH GRADE

Betty Reaser Tustin

Two approaches to spelling instruction were compared by measuring which program was more successful. The results of each program were measured by using the C.T.B.S. Level 1 spelling test for grade four. The means of the two groups were compared by using a t test.

Thirty-two fourth grade students participated in the study. The study covered a span of six months.

The control group used the materials and procedures of the Macmillian Basal Series. The experimental group used the Spelltex Individualized Spelling Kit. There was no significant difference between the total group of students using the individualized approach and the total group of students using the basal series. The findings indicated no significant difference between the girls in the control group and the girls in the experimental group. There was no significant difference in spelling abilities between the boys using the Macmillian Basal Series and the boys using the Spelltex Individualized Spelling Kit.

VITA

Betty Reaser Tustin was born near Cedarville, West Virginia, on October 25, 1932. After receiving her early education in the public schools of Gilmer County she attended Glenville State College where she received the Bachelor of Arts Degree in Elementary Education in 1959.

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